

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 SAM-01 SAB-01 IO-14 DRC-01 AID-20 EB-11

COME-00 TRSE-00 IGA-02 AGR-20 CIEP-03 MC-02 ACDA-19

/211 W

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R 241345Z SEP 74

FM AMEMBASSY CAIRO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9145

INFO AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAIRO 7455

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: UR EG

SUBJ: CALL BY SOVIET CHARGE AKOPOV

1. SOVIET CHARGE AKOPOV CALLED TODAY AT HIS REQUEST FOR AN EXCHANGE OF VIEWS ON GENERAL MIDDLE EAST SITUATION. SUMMARY OF TALK FOLLOWS:

2. DETENTE: AKOPOV NOTED THAT PRESIDENT FORD HAS TWICE RECEIVED GROMYKO IN PAST WEEK OR SO AND VIEWED THIS AS EVIDENCE OF OUR COMMON INTEREST IN FURTHERING DETENTE. I AGREED AND POINTED OUT USG HAS REPEATEDLY INDICATED ITS INTEREST IN DETENTE.

3. PALESTINIANS: AKOPOV EXPRESSED PUZZLEMENT ON GOE POSITION ON PALESTINIANS AND POINTED TO CONTRADICTION BETWEEN MOST RECENT EGYPTIAN-SYRIAN-PLO COMMUNIQUE (CAIRO 7393 NOTAL) AND EARLIER SADAT-HUSSEIN COMMUNIQUE. I AGREED THAT THERE APPEARED TO BE A CONTRADICTION, BUT NOTED THAT SENIOR EGYPTIAN OFFICIALS ASSERT THERE IS
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NONE. THEY INSIST ALGEIRS FORMULA, WHICH MOST RECENT

TRIPARTITE COMMUNIQUE CITES, WAS NEVER INTENDED TO APPLY TO PALESTINIANS WHO HAVE FORMALLY TAKEN AN OATH OF ALLEGIENCE TO ONE OR ANOTHER ARAB GOVERNMENT. WE AGREED JORDANIANS CLEARLY DO NOT SEE IT THAT WAY. AKOPOV RELATED TALK LAST NIGHT WITH JORDANIAN AMBASSADOR, WHO HAD SAID THAT HKJ WOULD NOT ATTEND GENEVA. QUADRI PARTITE OR ARAB SUMMIT CONFERENCES.

4. MIDDLE EAST SITUATION: AKOPOV COMMENTED MIDDLE EAST PEACE TALKS SEEMED TO HAVE GROUND TO A HALT. IT WAS IMPORTANT THAT MOVEMENT TOWARD PEACE BE REVIVED THROUGH FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL. FAILURE TO ACHIEVE THIS COULD RESULT IN RAPID DETERIORATION OF SITUATION. HE POINTED TO RECENT WAR TALK IN THE AREA IN SUPPORT OF HIS VIEW. GENEVA CONFERENCE SHOULD BE RECONVENED SOONEST. I TOLD HIM USG SHARES VIEW THAT THERE MUST BE FURTHER PROGRESS TOWARD PEACE SETTLEMENT AND HAS BEEN EXERTING ITS EFFORTS TOWARD THIS END. SITUATION BETWEEN ARABS AND ISRAELIS AND AMONG ARABS THEMSELVES IS COMPLEX AND FRAMEWORK FOR NEXT ROUND MUST BE SOUGHT. RECENT VISITS OF VARIOUS ARAB AND ISRAELI LEADERS TO WASHINGTON HAD HELPED TO PROCESS AND DOUBTLESS THERE WOULD BE FURTHER DISCUSSIONS NOW THAT VARIOUS FONMINS ARE IN NEW YORK. IA GREED RECENT WAR TALK WAS UNHELPFUL, BUT SHGGESTED IT SHOULD BE VIEWED AS PARTLY INTENDED FOR DOMESTIC CONSUMPTION. NEVERTHELESS, THERE WAS ALWASYS THE DANGER OF INCIDENTS, WHICH COULD ESCALATE. I SUGGESTED BOTH USSR AND USG SHOULD DO UTMOST TO URGE MIDDLE EAST STATES TO ESCHEW ANY RESUMPTION OF HOSTILITIES AND WORK TOWARD RESUMPTION OF STEPS TOWARD PEACE. HE PROFESSED TO AGREE, BUT DID NOT EXCLUDE THE POSSIBILITY THAT WAR MIGHT AGAIN BREAK OUT.

5. SOVIET MINE CLEARANCE AND SUEZ CANAL: AKOPOV NOTED SOVIET MINE CLEARANCE OPERATION IN STRAITS OF GUBAL HAD NOW CLEARED A CHANNEL FIVE KILOMETERS WIDE AND 34 KILOMETERS LONG. IN RESPONSE MY COMMENT I HAD HEARD OPERATION COMPLETED, HE DENIED THIS, SAYING TWO MORE MONTHS NEEDED TO COMPLETE THE WORK. THERE HAD BEEN SOME "INCIDENTS"

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WITH ISRAELI VESSELS, BUT HE KNEW OF NONE SINCE AUG 22. HE ASKED WHEN US MINE/SALVAGE CLEARANCE OF CANAL LIKELY TO BE FINISHED. TOLD HIM OUR BEST ESTIMATE IS MID-DECEMBER. HE EXPRESSED SLIGHT SURPRISE, SAYING HE HAD THTHOUGHT IT WOULD BE NOVEMBER. HE THEN PROBED WHEN SUEZ CANAL WOULD BE REOPENED, SAYING HE UNDERSTOOD THIS MIGHT BE DELYAED UNTIL AFTER FURTHER ISRAELI WITHDRAWAL IN SINAI HAD TAKEN PLACE. I SAID I DID NOT KNOW GOE'S

PLANS RE REOPENING, BUT ACKNOWLEDGED I HAD ALSO HEARD SUEZ CANAL REOPENING MIGHT NOT BE UNTIL SPRING. AKOPOV CLAIMED ISRAELIS ARE MAKING FREE PASSAGE THROUGH CANAL CONDITION OF NAY FURTHER WITHDRAWAL, WHILE EGYPTIANS ARE INSISTING FURTHER WITHDRAWAL MUST PRECEDE REOPENING. HE FORESAW STALEMATE IN THE OFFING.

6. FAHMY VISIT: REFERRING TO FAHMY'S UPCOMING VISIT TO MOSCOW, AKOPOV SAID USSR IS READY TO RECEIVED EGYPTIAN FONMIN. AS YET, FAHMY HAD BEEN UNABLE TO GIVE HIM LIST OF DELEGATES OR SUBJECTS WHICH EGYPTIANS WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS. FAHMY HAD CLAIMED THAT PRESIDENT DADAT STILL STUDYING THESE MATTERS. ONLY SUBSTANTIVE ITEM FAHMY HAD MENTIONED WAS ARRANGING FOR EGYPTIAN-SOVIET SUMMIT. ANY OTHER SUBJECTS OF INTEREST WOULD BE GIVEN HIM LATER. WHEN I REFERRED TO RECENT CAIRO PRESS ARTICLE SETTING FORTH SUPPOSED POINTS TO BE DISCUSSED (CAIRO 7341), AKOPOV SAID THIS HAD NO OFFICIAL STANDING.

7. EGYPTIAN ECONOMIC SITUATION: AKOPOV NOTED SITUATION LOCALLY IS TENSE BECAUSE OF SUPPLY SHORTAGES. FOODSTUFFS IN PARTICULARLY SHORT SUPPLY. HE UNDERSTOOD THAT AS A RESULT OF FAHMY VISIT TO WASHINGTON, USG IS PROVIDING SOME HELP. I CONFIRMED PL 480 TOBACCO AND WHEAT PROGRAMS. AKOPOV SAID USSR IS ALSO PROVIDING ECONOMIC HLEP, BUT DID NOT ELABORATE. I POINTED OUT THAT EGYPT NEEDS ASSISTANCE FORM ANYONE WHO CAN HELP.

8. SOVIET ARMS: IN REPLY TO MY QUERY WHETHER AL-NAHAR REPORT THAT 50 MIG 23S HAD RECENTLY BEEN DELIVERED WAS CORRECT, AKOPOV SAID IT WAS NOT. SOVIETS HAD SENT "A FEW" SHIPS CONTAINING SPARE PARTS AND SIMILAR MATERIAL. HE EXPRESSED PERSONAL VIEW THAT USSR WILL CONFIDENTIAL

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EVENTUALLY FULFILL ALL OF ITS OUTSTANDING ARMS COMMITMENTS TO GOE. ANY NEW MILITARY SUPPLY COMMITMENTS WOULD HAVE TO AWAIT DECISION ARRIVED AT DURING AN EGYPTIAN-SOVIET SUMMIT, WHEN AND IF ONE TAKES PLACE. EILTS

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DETENTE, POLITICAL SITUATION, DREDGING, SUEZ CANAL, MINISTERIAL VISITS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 24 SEP 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: izenbei0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974CAIRO07455
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740268-0845
From: CAIRO
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t19740920/aaaaaqou.tel
Line Count: 159
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: izenbei0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2002 by kelleyw0>; APPROVED <11 MAR 2003 by izenbei0>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: CALL BY SOVIET CHARGE AKOPOV
TAGS: PFOR, PINS, UR, EG, XF, (FAHMY, ISMAIL), (AKOPOV)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005